

**GRAPE
VINE
AIR
WAVES
2005**

GRAPEVINEAIRWAVESDAILY2005 ISSUE 1 of 3



FRIDAY





Friday.schedule

Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús

Kerrang - K! Club

20:00	Hölt hóra
20:40	Sign
21:20	Singapore Sling
22:00	Dr. Spock
22:40	Mínus
23:40	Juliette & The Licks (US)

The National Theatre - Þjóðleikhúskjallarinn

22:30	Siggi Ármann
23:10	Lokbrá
23:50	We Painted the Walls
00:30	Small Colin (UK)
01:10	Ske
01:50	Stranger
02:30	Jagúar

Gaukur á Stöng

20:00	The End
20:40	Ben Frost with Valgeir Sigurðsson
21:20	Dáðadrengrir
22:00	Kimono
22:45	Ghostigital
23:30	The Mitchell Brothers (UK)
00:30	The Fiery Furnaces (UK)
01:30	Forgotten Lores

NASA

Moshi Moshi night

20:00	Dr. Disco Shrimp
20:45	Stórsveit Nix Noltes
21:30	Unsound
22:15	Au Revoir Simone (US)
23:00	Metronomy (UK)
23:45	Lo-Fi-Fnk (SE)
00:30	Architechure in Helsinki (AUS)
01:30	Hjálmar

Pravda

21:00	Pakku
22:00	Frank Murder
23:00	Biogen
00:00	Adron
01:00	Plat
02:00	Donna Mess
03:00	DJ Óli ofur
04:00	Exos

Grand Rokk

Reykjavik Grapevine

20:00	ÉG
20:40	Ókind
21:20	Brúðarbandið
22:00	Tony the Pony
22:40	Mammút
23:20	Ólvis
00:00	Hellvar
00:40	Delicia Mini (DK/IS)
01:30	Croisztans

DJ between sets:
Alan Love (UK)

TUNE IN



A helpful sponsored reminder:

RÁS 2 99.9 FM

will offer live concert coverage of this year's Airwaves, just as they have done of every Iceland Airwaves since 1999.

THEY WILL BE COVERING THE FOLLOWING VENUES:

Wednesday: Grand Rokk

Thursday: Reykjavík Art Museum and Nasa

Friday: Reykjavík Art Museum and Gaukur á Stöng

Saturday: Reykjavík Art Museum

MASTHEAD



GRAPEVINEAIRWAVEDAILYFRIDAYOCTOBER212005

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featureINTERVIEW



Surprise! We're Not Just Playing, We're Deconstructing

An Interview with Ghostigital

BY PAUL F. NIKOLOV PHOTO: GUNNAR SVANBERG

>>> **Ghostigital** is the brainchild of former **Sugarcubes** frontman and **Smekkleysa** (Bad Taste) record label owner **Einar Örn Benediktsson** and artist **Birgir Örn Thoroddsen**, also known as **Curver**. Formed in 2003, the duo recruited other musicians around the concept of a band that employs improvisation and surprise - when playing live, the other musicians are often expected to accompany music they're hearing for the first time. Known for their energetic live act and hardcore electronic industrial beats, **Ghostigital** managed to out-perform indie legends **Sonic Youth**, whom they supported last month. **The Grapevine** spoke with **Einar** and **Curver** to find out how chaos has kept them together. <<<

TELL ME ABOUT THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE YOU LIKE TO USE IN YOUR LIVE SHOWS.

Einar: We don't tell the other musicians what we are going to do, and we don't discuss it with each other. We just go on stage, and listen to each other. What we're trying to do is create a situation where we become surprised by what we're playing. So if we're putting the other musicians under pressure by not telling them what we're going to do, we're putting ourselves

under even greater pressure to create the environment that we're a part of.

Curver: If the guitar players start learning the songs, then we're in trouble. We've had some problems where the guitar players are starting to learn the songs, and then they're not playing freely enough.

WHAT ADVANTAGE DO YOU THINK THE ELEMENT OF CHAOS HAS OVER A MORE STRUCTURED SET, WHERE THE MUSICIANS KNOW WHAT THEY'RE GOING TO PLAY?

Einar: It's live music. I mean, what advantage is there to seeing a show live? It's because there's something happening. Something creative is being done, where you can't figure out what happens next. What we're doing is deconstructing the songs. We're not destroying them; we're freeing them up.

IN SEEING YOU PLAY LIVE, I SAW THAT YOU HAVE A LOT OF THESE STATE-OF-THE-ART COMPUTERS AND MIXERS ON STAGE, BUT YOU ALSO HAVE THIS OLD ANALOGUE LOOP TAPE MACHINE. IS THIS FOR NOSTALGIC REASONS, OR IS THERE SOMETHING THAT A MACHINE CAN DO THAT A COMPUTER CAN'T?

Einar: Yeah, it can break down.

Curver: It's a Roland Space Echo. I don't

think it sounds that great, sound quality wise, but I think it has a more melodic sound than a digital programme. Plus, this thing is so easy to fix when it breaks down. I think it was made for the army or something.

ONE SONG OF YOURS THAT'S BEEN STUCK IN MY HEAD LATELY IS IN COD WE TRUST. I'M GUESSING IT'S ABOUT ICELAND?

Einar: It's about the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. They had a commemoration in Moscow and (Icelandic Prime Minister) Halldór Ásgrímsson was present. He came on the news here and he said that it seemed to him that there was a lot of emotion there (in Moscow). The man must not have realized what the Second World War meant to the Russians, how many people died there. But then he meets Bush. He does not talk to Bush about the war in Iraq, or famine in Africa, or Third World help or anything like that. He uses the opportunity to talk to Bush about cod. This is what these two great minds talk about when they meet.

Curver: But then there is a thing in Iceland where we trust in cod, you know. Maybe we try to put more trust now in fashion or computers but the land is built on fisheries. So, in cod we trust. That's what we do.

HOW HAS YOUR (13-YEAR-OLD) SON HRAFNKELL BEEN FARING AS YOUR BAND'S TRUMPET PLAYER?

Einar: Really well. He's been with us since day one, since he was ten. He started learning the trumpet so I asked him if he wanted to play one song on the first album. From that experience I asked him if he wanted to play live, he said yes, so we

took him along.

Curver: He's the only member of the band who knows how to improvise. I don't need to worry about him at all.

Einar: He's the only one who gets applause.

SO WHAT DO YOU ALL HAVE LEFT TO TRY, IN TERMS OF MUSIC?

Einar: Actually, there is a play that we're doing later this year. It's a play by Jón Atli Jónasson, who also did the play *Draugalestin*, that I really want to do because then we'll be taking old Icelandic songs and making new songs out of them. And there is a horror movie that (Icelandic poet and Björk lyricist) Sjórn has written that we are pencilled in to do the soundtrack for.

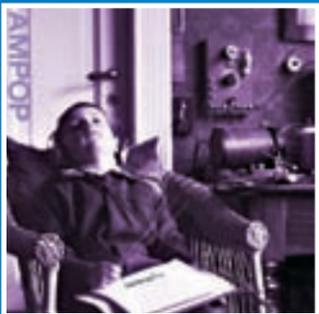
Curver: The only thing that we really haven't explored is minimalism. We've been working so much in the maximum, with all the data in the songs, that we've been thinking of going into the minimum.

Einar: That's maybe the way to go.

>>> **Ghostigital** plays **Gaukur á Stöng** on **Friday, Oct 22**. <<<

Einar Örn passed the trumpet he used with the Sugarcubes over to his son, but he is still an accomplished jazz musician. He recently made contributions to local jazz king Tómas Einarsson.

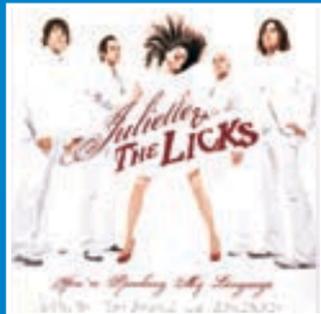
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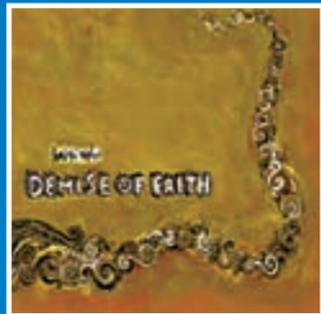
Ampop



Worm Is Green



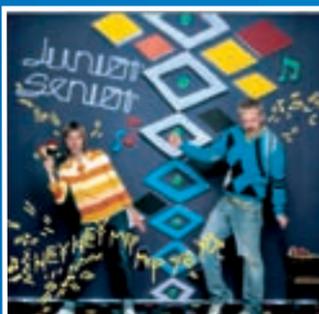
Juliette and the Licks



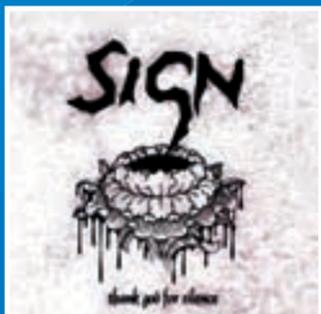
Helgi Valur



Hjalmar



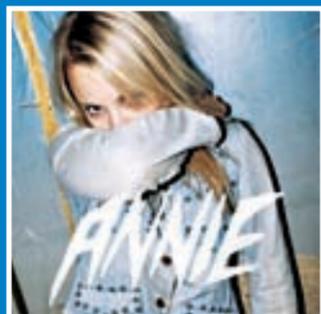
Junior Senior



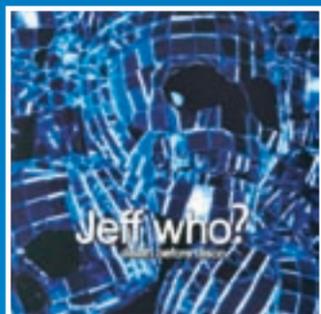
Sign



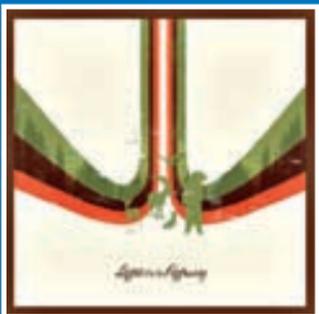
Architecture In Helsinki



Annie



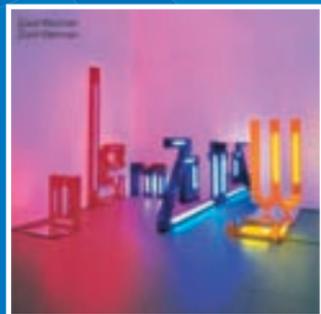
Jeff Who?



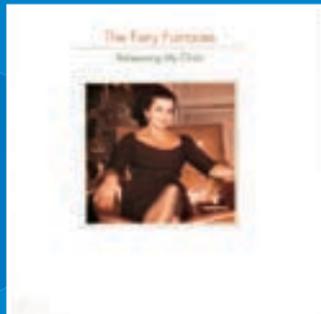
Lights On The Highway



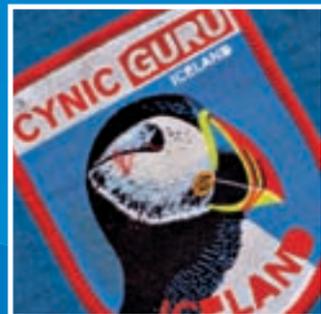
Power Solo



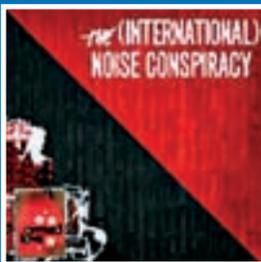
Zoot Woman



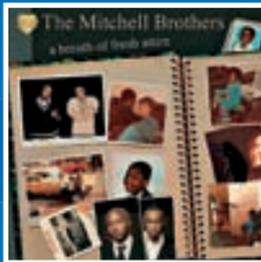
The Fiery Furnaces



Cynic Guru



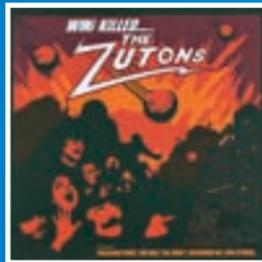
International Noise Conspiracy



The Mitchell Brothers



VAX



Zutons



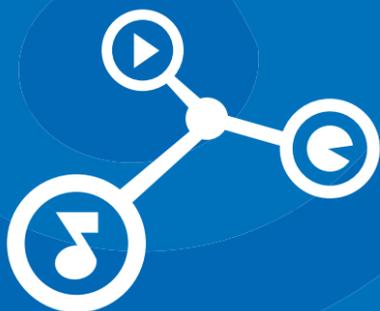
José Gonzales



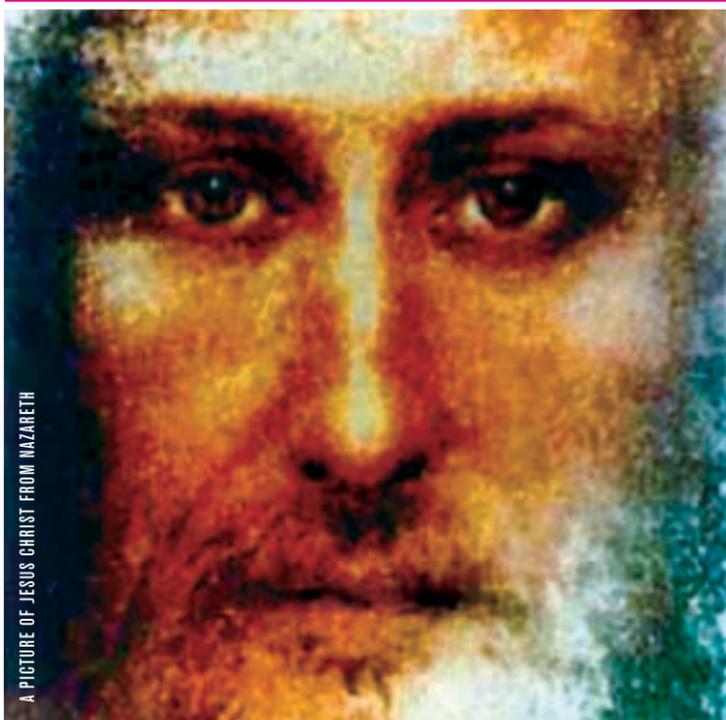
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INTERVIEW



Music from the Bubble

An Interview with Junior Senior

Copenhagen. We'd been in a bubble, in our own little world, isolated. There wasn't anything being played out there that we liked, so we started writing the music that we wanted to hear. We were certainly surprised by how well that worked.

BY PAUL F NIKOLOV
PHOTO: JEREMY GOLDBERG

>>> Danish dance pop duo **Junior Senior** took **Icelandic** radio by storm in 2003 with their hit single **Move Your Feet**. The single's accompanying video, a hyperactive animation montage that looked like it was composed by the **Atari** team in **1981**, helped secure their name as a breath of fresh air in a region of the world not known for its dance pop acts. After two years of touring and recording, **Junior Senior** are finally coming to **Iceland**. **The Grapevine** spoke to **Junior** from his home in the **UK** to see what they had in store for **Airwaves**. <<<

SO WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO LATELY?

Junior: Since the album came out much later in some parts of the world than others, we've spent more than two years doing concerts around the world promoting it. Last year I spent the first six to eight months writing songs for the new album, because I can't write songs on the road. It's too hectic.

IS THE NEW ALBUM TAKING ANY DEPARTURES FROM THE PREVIOUS ONE?

Junior: Definitely. We don't see a lot of bands doing what we're doing. It seems like a lot of "left field" bands have been doing this Gang of Four style of punk. When everyone's doing the same thing it's really boring. It's like there's no more funk in music anymore. So we wanted to explore the old stuff that we like, without doing a garage version of our influences. There'll be more harmonies, more funk.

I CAN'T SAY I'VE HEARD A LOT OF HAPPY DANCE MUSIC OR FUNK COMING OUT OF SCANDINAVIA.

Junior: That's true. I think what we're doing is unique. We didn't really come from any scene in

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO PLAY AIRWAVES?

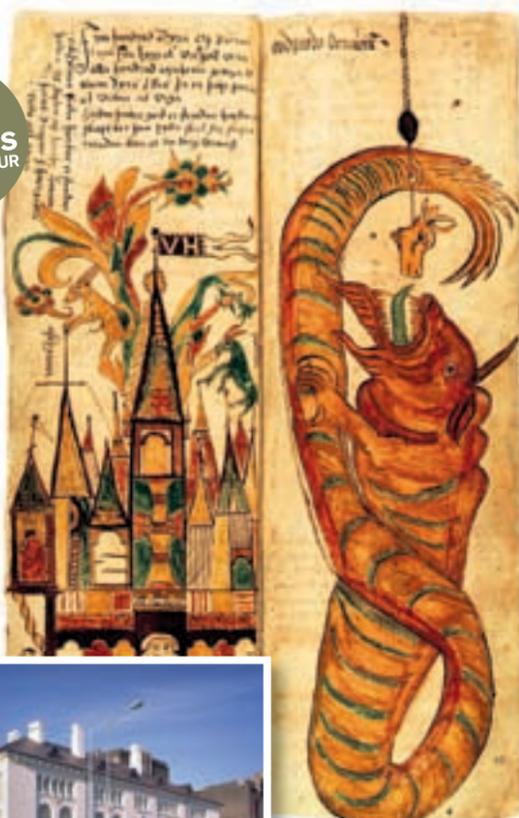
Junior: We've always wanted to play Iceland and it's a cool festival. Iceland has such a big music scene and we want to see how it is. We've heard it's one of the more interesting places to play.

YOUR LIVE ACT IS KNOWN FOR BEING PRETTY EXPLOSIVE, BUT IN TALKING TO YOU, YOU DON'T EXACTLY SEEM LIKE THE "EXPLOSIVE" TYPE.

Junior: Yeah, we're both pretty shy (laughs). We just go out there and play. When we're on stage, it's a natural thing. When we're performing we feel like we're in the right element, so if people don't like it, we know they're wrong. No, I'm kidding. But if you see our show you'll definitely have a good time.

>>> **Junior Senior** played **NASA** on **Thursday, Oct. 20**. <<<

Junior Senior's new album, **Hey Hey My My Yo Yo**, will be available for sale at the Bad Taste music store during Airwaves. You can visit their website at



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IN LISTENING TO D-D-DON'T STOP THE BEAT, I COULD HAVE SWORN I HEARD SOME EARLY MICHAEL JACKSON IN THERE. AM I IMAGINING THIS?

Junior: No, you're not imagining it (laughs). We love Michael Jackson. Off the Wall (one of Jackson's earliest records) is definitely his most celebrated period, so we took a few hints from there. I'm more a fan of the Jackson 5 myself, a big fan. He might be a little bit scary now, but he's definitely a great composer.



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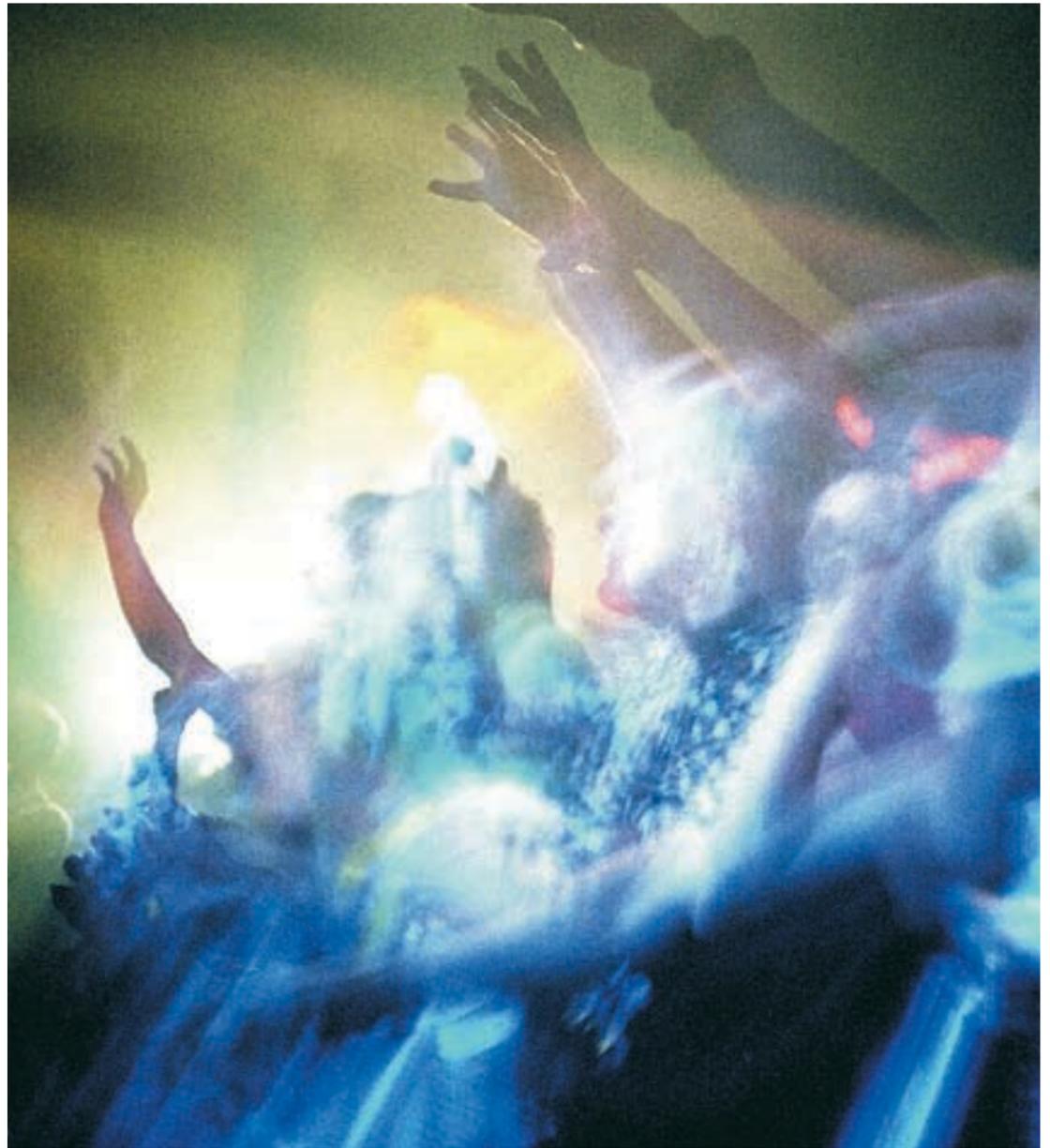
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Grapevine Picks for Friday

>>> The Reykjavík Grapevine is usually a highly opinionated street paper. During the festival, we do our best to be magnanimous, but we just can't help ourselves. While every band at the Iceland Airwaves Festival deserves attention, here are the Grapevine picks for the evening. <<<

up to a side stage at 12 Tónar and rock the house alternative style. Don't tell anyone. It's a secret.

GRAND ROKK 20:00
ÞJÓÐLEIKHÚSKJALLARINN 23:10

Ég & We Painted the Walls

Done properly, experimental music leaves a huge amount of space for collision and error. Ég and We Painted the Walls hit brilliance at times, and often crash and burn. Essential bands for this year's festival.

Ég at Grand Rokk, 20:00. We Painted the Walls at Þjóðleikhúskjallarinn at 23:10.

HAFNARHÚSIÐ 21:20

Singapore Sling

It's not just that Singapore Sling have great sound quality and good rock, nor is it that Barði Jóhannsson of Bang Gang will be serving as substitute guitarist. It's that you never know if Sling will make it through a show, and somehow the band seems to enjoy this as much as their often malicious audiences.

NASA 00:30

Architecture in Helsinki

These Aussies put together a wondrous set. If their two albums, Fingers Crossed and In Case We Die haven't made it into your collection, they will within a week of this festival. Beyond the happiness and joy, there is also the sex appeal—said one Aussie fan who travelled to Iceland to see Architecture for this festival, "I've known three couples who met and fell in love at Architecture shows."

12 Tónar 17:00

Big Super Secret People

Who are the sneakiest rock stars in Reykjavík? Trabant and Mugison. They'll sneak

NASA 20:45

Stórsveit Nix Noltes

Icelandic bands aren't shy about trying musical styles from elsewhere in the world, but only Stórsveit Nix Noltes has dared venture into the deliriously frantic but joyful genre of Balkan music. Known for tight, highly energetic performances, they also deserve props for being able to play in 7/8-time.

NASA 01:30

Hjálmar

Icelandic reggae: many are sceptical at best when they see these two words together, but believe us, Hjálmar play some of the most convincing early-70s style reggae we've ever heard. Slip one of their songs on a King Tubby mix and see if anyone notices. Their live shows get people hopping, too. Irie.

GAUKUR Á STÖNG 21:20

Dáðadrengir

We used to call these guys 2003 Músiktilraunir song contest winners, but Dáðadrengir's brand of goofball cartoon rap-metal has become so ingrained in the Reykjavík music scene that it seems more fitting to refer to them simply as "dope." And that's before they put on their face paint.

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WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE REVIEWS

GAUKUR Á STÖNG >>> Tender Moments <<< Whether an audience of ten stiff people is a good outcome for a band playing on the very first evening of a festival remains unsure. What is certain is that Tóti, the singer of **Dogdaze**, took up the audience's vibe by keeping his torso in an angle of 90 degrees (to the floor) throughout the entire set, which, together with paraphernalia like baseball caps and Deftones shirts, was true to their heroes, Bad Religion. ¶ **Nilfisk** took the audience so much by surprise that, unfortunately, no one dared to move, as would have been suitable for such a perfectly delivered set of danceable garage rock. The shock that came with this sudden rise in quality was just too unexpected. ¶ Though their punk rock did not necessarily sound as if they had won the Battle of the Bands, **Búdrýgindi's** singer Maggi definitely looked like it. This kid was pretentious as hell, and he put on an incredible performance, from comments like "everyone in Iceland knows this song" to hurling the mic through the air and, finally, jumping over the banister to scream into people's faces. ¶ When **Dimma** finally came on, there was bass that you could feel. A band that rocked hard and sported haircuts so hopelessly old-school I racked my brain trying to figure out who could have created them. Though a ballad (starting with the words "I touch myself...") proved the singer, Hjalti, had a voice, this was their only tender moment, with the rest of the set being delivered with such fierceness it was almost cute. **JULIKA HUETHER ¶ ¶ >>> Floored <<<** Dikta played a six-song set of melodic guitar rock to a crowded house. Intent on mixing up different influences, with an opening song driven by a funk-inspired bass line, followed by a mellow piano song, they seemed to aspire to do something more than run-of-the-mill pop-rock. And at times they actually deliv-

ered, especially on a rocking fourth song, which met the crowd's approval. ¶ As soon as **Dikta** ended their set, **I Adapt** started banging the drums - on the opposite end of the room. These veterans of hardcore punk set up across from the main stage, actually flooring it, with no regard



I ADAPT

PHOTO BY RÓBERT

for the elaborate stage set up and lighting. Suddenly, what earlier seemed to be a relatively safe distance by the bar in the back of the room became the centre of the mosh pit. ¶ The **I Adapt** set immediately launched into a nine-song set featuring three new songs. Between songs, **I Adapt** singer Birkir joked with the crowd, giving his recommendations for Airwaves (**Kimono** and **Future Future**) and getting a message across about the gender wage inequality and the upcoming women's day off. ¶ The crowd was truly engaged. The main bar, which I stood alongside, hardly sold beer during their set, and people in the back were climbing onto tables for a better view of the floor. **Mínus's**

Nilfisk took the audience so much by surprise that, unfortunately, no one dared to move.

NILFISK GAUKUR Á STÖNG

singer Krummi told me: "**I Adapt** is the best hardcore band Iceland has ever produced - fast and dangerous." ¶ It's in nobody's favour to follow a performance like **I Adapt's**, but **Days of Our Lives** managed admirably. With much of the crowd gone, they went through a six-song set of promising materi-

the guitars that they began to turn heads. More impressive still was a slow number that Hafdís began crooning in a slow, smoky, bluesroom voice that belied her age. **BART CAMERON ¶ ¶ >>> Stealing the Hemm Hemm Spotlight <<<** Judging from the line snaking out the door two hours

Suddenly, what earlier seemed to be a relatively safe distance by the bar in the back of the room became the centre of the mosh pit.

I ADAPT GAUKUR Á STÖNG

ing about confessing sins, demons in disguise, and getting high, things quickly escalated into the ethereal realm of a scalding Sunday morning church service. By the time Villi - tie loosened, collar splayed, sweat running down his face - threw himself into Devil That Woman, Vax had offered the first clue that there was something special going on here. ¶ **Benni Hemm Hemm** followed, taking the stage with a sea of camera phones and video recorders poised to capture something magical. And they almost got it. Taking a shambling cacophony of noise and cobbling it into a triumphant opening blast of brass and crashing cymbals, Hemm Hemm's ten-piece army announced their arrival with authority. ¶ But with Benedikt Hermannsson's baritone vocals buried low in the mix, things never quite exploded the way that maybe they were expected to. Some members of the audience even started clinking their glasses together and shushing each other in an attempt to actually hear him sing. The band answered by lifting Hermannsson's sombre singing with a silvery blast of steel guitar, which led them into the finale: A sweet explosion of "la la las", tinkling xylophones, and orchestral fireworks. >>> **The crowd - sweaty, stinky, and exhausted - could finally exhale. Or so they thought.** <<< Because by the time **Jakobínarína** - a baby-faced gang of 15-to-17 year olds - took the stage, what was previously a concert quickly morphed into a frenzied dance party. Shirts were shed, booties were shaken, even a member of **Sigur Rós** started pushing his way to the front of the stage. As did a few conspicuous representatives from American record labels. And why not? With their lead singer, Gunnar, bopping and preening around the stage like some pimply John Lydon, **Jakobínarína** kicked and screamed their way through a set that owed more to the syncopated snarl of

al, which nicely blended powerful guitar riffs with melodic song lines. They ended their set somewhat abruptly, but returned for an encore after receiving warm applause. **SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON ¶ ¶ GRAND ROKK >>> The West-woman Blues <<<** Last year, three young women from the Westman Islands decided they would become a band and perform at Airwaves. This year, the group, now named **Vagínas**, opened a night of eclectic music at Grand Rokk. The first half of the set contained unremarkable and underplayed rock. The three founding members of **Vagínas** are more a classic folk-style vocal group than a rock band, and it was only when they eased off on

before their scheduled show time, it was clear that the first night of Iceland Airwaves belonged to local big band troubadour **Benni Hemm Hemm**. Too bad **Vax** and **Jakobínarína** had to swoop in and hijack the evening. ¶ Not that Hemm Hemm and his merry band didn't deliver what the overflowing masses wanted. They just happened to run up against two groups that took advantage of the hype to deliver "I saw them when..." performances. ¶ After opening sets by **Vagínas**, **Benny Crespo's Gang**, and **The Foghorns** (who delivered the line of the night: "This is a bad place to be sober"), **Vax** set a properly epic tone for the evening. With their burly bear of a front man growl-

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The rest of the band looked as if this may have been a hobby that had gone too far.

CYNIC GURU NASA

No one here is trying to be a rock star; they just want people to have a good time.

PRAVDA

MC Nonni is either insane, mentally disabled or really, really stupid, but it appeared he was going for a combination of all three.

MC NONNI PRAVDA

PiL then the electro-indie rock they intended. Which is a much better thing. ¶ Gunnar even managed to name-check the **Wu Tang Clan**, shouting triumphantly to the crowd, "Jakob ain't nothing to fuck with." ¶ Show closers **Coral**, playing to a half-empty room, found that out firsthand. BART BLASENGAME **NASA >>> Hermigervill versus ABC Mint Chewing Gum <<<** NASA kicked off with what at first appeared to be a wedding band, **Cynic Guru**, a five-piece light-rock outfit whose disarmingly charming lead guitarist/vocal Roland also happens to be a violinist in the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra. Roland looked like he was living his dream; at a guess this is perhaps the culmination of years of extracurricular air guitar and rock grimaces in front of a bedroom mirror to the sounds of **Iron Maiden**. The rest of the band looked as if this may have been a hobby that had gone too far. ¶ You can't deny the talent. These chaps know what they are doing, and the opening festival audience generously responded to the cliché-ridden arrangements. The highlight was when Roland pulled out his electric violin as he shouted out, "No more of this guitar crap." Quite. Do you know he actually pulled it off? He was in his element, as strings began to fly off his bow in a genuinely passable early Radioheadesque climax, though you still hoped he had a spare bow for his day job. ¶ A lot of people had come just to see **Mr. Silla**. An old school friend of hers in the crowd told me "she used to win these jazz and soul competitions." It is no surprise this girl is used to winning. She knows she's good, though she doesn't quite know what to do with her hands. In theory she was spellbinding, but there was a lot of fidgeting. Against the plinky plonky, atonal backing from the laptop and guitar, her soulful voice seething sexuality and confidence, there was a façade of uncomfortable modesty. Compara-

ble to **Coco & Rosie** immediately, a band she covered along with an inspired reworking of a **Destiny's Child** classic. ¶ Singer Jara's performance suffered from a series of technical cock-ups and badly planned stagecraft. A pleasant but irrelevant narcissistic video

one-handers, **Hermigervill** turned the night around with big-beat, funky dance and Casio-styled loops. Halfway through the set, he shouted out, "Where are you?" and a sweet soul singer with a sense of humour managed to add to the show. When she left, and

on the surface of the sun), the night's theme was **Electro Breakz** (sic), and I found myself pleasantly surprised by the general modesty of the electro scene. No one here is trying to be a rock star; they just want people to have a good time. The ne plus ultra of

have been swayed by his retarded charm. The crowd did not so much as tap a foot. ¶ **Panoramix** is a one-man act. A young man clad in a tracksuit top stood behind an old-looking PC and delivered recklessly standard beats, devoid of any pretentiousness or minimalism. He and his colleagues have a unified purpose: To make you dance, and to make you dance now, and make sure you do not stop dancing until they say so. ¶ **Ozi** took full advantage of the crowd's drunkenness, throwing them into a sloppy frenzy whilst swerving from house to hip-hop to electro with gleeful abandon. Some of the songs were punctuated by awkward stops that left the dancers gagging for their next fix...it was quite beautiful to watch. ¶ The absurdly named **Zuckakis Mondeyano Project** were up next, stepping on stage with furs, hats and an ego that could power the spaceships they obsess so much about in their lyrics. The crowd's reaction to them was about as surreal as any cheer by people you've never seen before in a town of 200,000 for a band you've never heard of. The music itself was a cheesy and ironic amalgamation of R and B and electro that they admittedly did put their all into. Their finest musical moment came during the second-to-last song, *Composition of Nature*, with its prerecorded female backing vocals making a sultry whisper of the chorus chant. ¶ Affable as they were, however, irony is no substitute for talent, and their songs were, for the most part, as achingly plain as they were short and unoriginal. Oh, they were funny, sure, but sometimes funny just isn't enough, and live instruments on playback are never a turn-on, now matter how charismatic the performers in question are. ¶ The man who saved the night was unquestionably Ewok. Aside from being involved with the two opening acts, he played records as forcefully as one can handle vinyl. SINDRI ELDON



BENNI HEMM HEMM

PHOTO BY SIGURJÓN

managed to hold up the performance after the first song. **Cotton + Einn** know how to make an entrance; their stormingly ridiculous wiggled and piggy backing entrance was a welcome release. They proceeded to give NASA some dirty electro punk. In between white boy chanting, you could hear rare glimpses of almost soul-girl squealing. **Funk Harmony Park**. What to say? Big bass, uncharismatic blokes with 'oh so crazy' visuals. Still, with NASA packed, people began to move. It is amazing what a good bass line can do even when a performance is less than inspired. ¶ The award for outstanding performance of the night goes to **Hermigervill**. Confident, enthusiastic, tight and talented, he kept control of decks, mixers, synths and control pads while encouraging the eager audience. From the Jingle Bells intro, through samples of James Brown plus infectious synth jazz

Hermigervill removed his jacket, there was almost a riot. ¶ Have you ever eaten someone else's already chewed chewing gum? Well **Annie's** performance was much like this tasteless goo after the **Hermigervill** three-courser. Disappointing, tired and just plain dull. **Annie** has the attitude - more **Blondie** than **Kylie** - but she was stiff, not naturally pop-tastic, with a voice less rock star and more soft mint. But the NASA crowd seemed to love **Annie** despite the gig's shortcomings - was this making the best of a bad situation, or because she was sucking up so badly that it was fun? Whichever, as the encores began, people began to leave even though the bar was still open. DEBORAH COUGHLIN ¶ ¶ **PRAVDA >>>** Dance... NOW! <<< According to the embarrassingly bad Festival Guide (let me put it this way: it couldn't guide you to a heat source if you were standing

this were undoubtedly the night's first act, **Helgi Mullet Crew**. Friendly-looking and shy, they introduced themselves and played a far too short and far too quiet set of brisk, funk-laden house beats before retreating into DJ-land. ¶ **MC Nonni** is either insane, mentally disabled or really, really stupid, but it appeared he was going for a combination of all three, which would have made for a good show if these mindsets didn't cancel each other out. There was a certain conviction missing in Nonni's performance, but it hardly matters, since the music speaks for itself: lyrics that make **Wesley Willis** sound refined and intellectual were yelped, yelled and even belched out over playful and minimal electro beats that sounded very familiar to anyone who has spent more than a half-hour fiddling around with **Propellerheads** software. Still, anyone who let their guard down could easily

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ARTIST

The Perceptionists

PLACE: GAUKURINN

TIME: 23:00

>>>Toccat and Fugue in D Minor... No You Didn't <<< DJ Therapy stepped up and began working a pair of turntables with incredible dexterity, warming up the crowd for the other two members of the hip-hop act that literally brought tears to my eyes, The Perceptionists. MC Akrobatik's booming baritone and Mr. Lif's nasal growl accompanied each other perfectly, delivering rapid-fire rhymes backed by a bare bones, bass heavy beat. They were able to work the crowd into a loyal frenzy with repeated calls to "make some noise," bumping fists with people in the front row, and the occasional references to Iceland even within the rhymes themselves. And props definitely need to be given to DJ Therapy, if for no other reason than the man spun the first few bars of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor on top of a hardcore beat - and made it succeed with flying colours. In terms of lyrical content, Akrobatik and Mr. Lif had no problem swinging from old school party rhymes ("Pump your fist like this / Like what? / Like this!") to more political numbers ("Where were the weapons of mass destruction? / We've been looking for months and we ain't found nothin'") seamlessly. Concise beats, complementary voices, great stage charisma and the ability to get the crowd up and keep them up, The Perceptionists are everything hip-hop is supposed to be.

PAUL F NIKOLOV



THE PERCEPTIONISTS

PHOTO BY ÁRNI TORFA

Elvís

**Vatnsstig 3
101 Reykjavik**

Elvís



ARTIST
José Gonzales
PLACE: ÞJÓÐLEIKHÚSKJALLARINN
TIME: 23:40

>>> Sleepy González OR Misery Loves Company <<< After missing his connecting flight, being forced to wear the same black shirt and jeans for three days straight, and having to go to work with an atrociously bad loner guitar, José González was in need of a little love on Thursday night. By the time the sandwiched together crowd here physically pushed him back onstage for an encore of Joy Division's Love Will Tear Us Apart, it was perfectly clear that love, was indeed, in the air. ¶ "I got some emails from Iceland before I came here," the 27 year old said as he huddled in a corner signing autographs and bracing for giant pats on the back from fans. "But I was really surprised when people started singing along to my songs or clapping when I would start a new one." ¶ He shouldn't be. Despite only being on the musical radar for the past couple of months, González's sombre, flamenco-on-downers warbling has burrowed upward from a UK whisper to a legitimate underground buzz. Fresh off a crowded showcase gig in New York City on Tuesday, the Buenos Aires-born, Sweden-reared González arrived in Iceland to further spread the word. If only his luggage had made it with him. ¶ "I think my things are lost in Boston somewhere," González explained. "They said maybe I'd get them tomorrow. But clothes are one thing. The guitar is what I really miss. I just played with the worst one I've ever held in my life." ¶ Not that anyone could tell the difference. Bending strings, warping frets, and laying down a sparse beat with stomped feet, González hunkered down over his guitar with his eyes closed. This was serious work. What emerged were whispered, melancholy songs that floated easily through the room like a slow moving rain cloud. Each one was met with whoops, whistles, and the occasional sing-along. Not bad for a man who, two years ago, was studying for his PhD in biochemistry. ¶ "I couldn't do both," he says. "So I just decided to stick with music. Since then I've been playing nearly 200 shows a year. To be honest I'm surprised I'm still out here." BART BLASENGAME



JOSÉ GONZALES PHOTO BY HEIDI HARTWIG

Airwaves Opening Hours

Thursday	10:00	-	20:00
Friday	10:00	-	20:00
Saturday	10:00	-	18:00
Sunday	13:00	-	18:00


Vatnsstig 3
101 Reykjavik



THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE REVIEWS

PRAVDA >>> This Place is Gonna Be Packed <<< Tourists, when you think of Reykjavík the first musical genre that comes to mind may well not be drum'n'bass, and Pravda may not be the first place on your list of places to visit. Pravda is a bar like many around the world with colour-by-numbers décor designed to appeal to the general, or rather not to offend. ¶ The first thing you notice is the lack of queue: NASA is packed, Grand Rokk is full, but this townie-type bar is, well, empty at 9pm. Half an hour later it isn't much better; the entertainment is basically just a glorified bog standard DJ slot with nothing to embellish the music, no visuals. ¶ At first **Ewok's** set is like background music to a few patrons' chitchat. That soon changes as a reasonable deal on Heineken softens the self-conscious. Still, the bar staff outdance the patrons. ¶ So how popular is drum'n'bass in Iceland then? Well one guy was quite convincing, "Drum'n'bass has become much more common in the past year, year and a half. It's coming out of the underground." At this point flyers are distributed for an upcoming **Mistress Barbara** gig at Pravda. The guy's girlfriend joins in, "She's amazing, we really love her here. Every 1st or 2nd of the month there's a drum'n'bass night in Pravda. We have people coming from all over, international, plus **DJ Lelli** and **Kalli**." ¶ The interesting thing about this night is that it is mainly locals, and they all seem to know each other. More and more people come in, and photographers that had come and gone before are now back and taking pics of **Lelli** as he finishes while **DJ Kalli** takes over and the deck skills are raised a bar. This is now pure drum'n'bass - they aren't slipping in anything in order to make it more user friendly and the burgeoning crowd is lovin' it. ¶ **High Contrast** are from the UK and, as it draws closer to the **HC** set, Pravda actually begins to look packed. Before, where there had been a few chairs free, there is no room, the few brave souls who used to occupy the dance floor seem to have bred. It's hard to find a place to stand and watch. ¶ **HC** start and people are really into it, hands in the air, cheering, and that's just the bar staff. If you left before the end you

would have noticed that there still wasn't a queue, nothing alluding to the party inside. It just proves it's the quiet ones you've got to watch. **DEBORAH COUGHLIN ¶ ¶ GAUKUR Á STÖNG >>> Hip-Hop in Stereo <<<** Gaukur á stöng got off to a slow start. Opening act **Spaceman** and **Cheese** suffered for being first. Despite their demands, they never managed to "get [our] hands in



DANÍEL ÁGÚST

PHOTO BY KARL PETERSEN

the air." Intact followed with a short set, playing new songs from their forthcoming album. They rightfully claimed to sound a little psychedelic and ambient, with the DJ cutting some jazzy samples. They kept things upbeat and seemed to enjoy themselves, which almost affected the small crowd already gathered. ¶ Third in line were seasoned members of the Icelandic hip-hop scene, **Bent & 7berg**, joined by **DJ Paranoia**. They played a tight set, which benefited hugely from their commanding stage presence and nice lyrical flow. Members of a growing group of audience finally started bobbing their heads and putting a few hands in the air. ¶ **Twisted Minds Crew** brought some help along, for the first time accompanied by a live drummer, a bass player and a guitarist. The add-on

translated into a much deeper and thicker sound - **Twisted Minds Crew** sounded stereo to everyone else's mono. The crowd finally began to show tangible signs of life. Rappers **Rain** and **Mystic One** showed their strength, backed up by the performance of **Beatmakin Troopa** and **DJ Kocoon** as well as the extended group of live instrumental players. **SVEINN BIRKIR**

BJÖRNSSON >>> Pump Your Fist Like This! <<< Hip-hop veteran **Cell 7**, accompanied by **DJ Big Gee**, kicked things off with a slow ragga beat and seemed to be holding back a bit at first. But once every girl in the club pushed her way forward and started to bounce, she started delivering rhymes with a sincere, relaxed self-confidence devoid of cockiness. Most of her songs were relatively short for hip-hop numbers, with beats reminiscent of that laid-back West Coast sound from the early 90s, until she kicked things up a notch with a Miami "beat jeep" number that got both genders dancing along. If her set had been longer, and if her songs were at least doubled in length, she would have almost certainly stolen the show. ¶ Following up was **Dóri DNA** with **Daníel Deluxe**. After plugging in the MP3

player and starting off with a shouty, atonal assault, they proceeded to play a collection of samples of their favourite rappers: we got to hear ten seconds of **Eazy-E**, **Tupac**, **Biggie Smalls**, and others while wondering why they wouldn't just do their own material. **Dóri DNA** then launched into his rhymes with bravado, getting the crowd on their feet, especially when doing

material from his previous group **Bæjarins Bestu**. So good was Dóri's delivery that the stylings of **Daníel Deluxe** seemed completely unnecessary, holding him back more than helping him. Here's hoping Dóri will have the confidence to step up to the mic alone in the future, because that's where he really shines. (See page 12 for **The Perceptionists**.) ¶ **DJ Platurn** was left in the unfortunate position of having to follow this explosive act, and things didn't fare well for him. Half the crowd left the club the moment **The Perceptionists** left the stage. For this reason, perhaps opening his set with a children's song version of **Peas Porridge Hot** on top of an annoying techno beat wasn't the best choice. He had obviously good scratching and mixing skills, but without an

For this reason, perhaps opening his set with a children's song version of Peas Porridge Hot on top of an annoying techno beat

DJ PLATURN GAUKUR Á STÖNG

"I'd like especially to welcome all members of the foreign press and record company executives. We love music!"

REYKJAVÍK'S SINGER-GUITARIST

accompanying MC - especially after an evening of MCs being in the spotlight - the impression left was that he probably would have fared better being put first on the bill instead of last. **PAUL F NIKOLOV ¶ JÓÐ-LEIKHÚSKJALLARINN >>> Shuck-and-Jive to Perco-lating Pop <<< Pétur Ben** weathered a late start and a rash of broken strings to bask in a rapturous reception from his native fans. And as far as his shuck-and-jive six-string work was concerned, it was certainly deserved. But lyrically, songs about the evil of television, loving each other, and his awkward attempts at social commentary probably translate better in his native tongue. Sung as they were in English though, they just came off naïve. ¶ **Eberg** closed the evening in typically eclectic style: slap bass, drum, and that electronic, effects-heavy coat hanger. Together they made a beautiful noise, providing a nice afterglow of danceable percolating pop to top off an evening full of dimly lit amour. **BART BLASENGAME HAFNARHÚSÍÐ >>> Keeping Warm in the Museum <<<** This six-band show - five local acts plus New York art-punks **New Radio** - was short on good songs but long on kinetic energy and well-manipulated noise. From gentle pitter-patter to ear-bursting guitar fuzz, the barrage of sound amply filled Hafnarhúsið - the cavernous art gallery-turned venue - even when warm bodies were in short supply. ¶ The evening began well: After **Bacon** turned out mostly improvised instrumentals in front of only a handful of onlookers, **Skakkamanage**, a co-ed guitar-organ-drums trio, worked up tender, rainy-day folk songs based around keyboard drones and gentle murmuring. Though their heartfelt lullabies tended to hide their heads in their hoodies, their set incorporated more melody than the next two acts combined, leaving the fairly spare crowd ill-prepared for the noise assault to come. ¶ "I'd like especially to welcome all members of the foreign press and record company executives. We love music!" exclaimed **Reykjavík's** cardigan-clad singer-guitarist as his five-piece band took the stage. Easily the loudest band of the evening (if not the loudest band in all of Iceland),

Henrik Vibskov

Eley Kishimoto

Roksanda Ilincic

Marjan Pejovski

KTZ

Wood Wood



It was clear that Reykjavík! could have set a smaller venue on fire.

REYKJAVÍK! HAFNARHÚSIÐ

Reykjavík! dropped punk barnburners that set the singer's throaty vocals – one part **Thom Yorke**, three parts desperate screech – over speedy, deftly syncopated stomp, with the guitarist shouting coarse interjections like an **Icelandic Flava Flav**. Their salvo of jagged guitars and desperate wailing was sometimes hard to take, but during some well-conceived passages – especially when the singer and guitarist engaged in some syncopated call-and-response – it was clear that **Reykjavík!** could have set a smaller venue on fire.

¶ **Skátar** – five jokester hooligans in white biohazard suits – sounded like a retro-minded punk-funk band with a pocket full of eccentricities, kicking out big PIL-style riffs and boomy beats while the singer shouted dadaist rants and dropped circus-like keyboard squiggles. Things grooved by breezily much of the time, but when **Skátar** worked up a maelstrom of ice-pick guitar, big beats and jokey war-whoops, their art-school approach gained ample forward motion. Too bad the crowd was either too frigid or too reticent to dance. ¶ **Hafnarhúsið** was packed by the time hometown heroes **Apparat Organ Quartet** (really a quintet) took the stage. Their well-received set was an admirable mix of soft and hard, with a loose-limbed drummer ploughing ahead while the four guys up front contributed a rainbow of cascading organ lines, mechanized **Kraftwerk** vocals, and echo-ey keyboard atmospheric. **Apparat's** set was weighed down by too much techno diddling, but they evoked the night's biggest cheers when they dropped a soaring pastoral jam – all swirling, heaven-bound organ lines and ecstatic singing – near the end of their forty-minute set. ¶ **New Radio** came off a bit like a curiosity: three skinny guys – including the black-haired frontman, looking like a goth street urchin in a ratty black-and-white striped shirt and a cartoonish top hat – manned two cellos and an upright bass, respectively, with the drummer dropping sturdy hard-rock grooves much of the time. Their songs ranged from dark, mournful art-rock ballads with weepy string lines to punk barnburners in which the cellos sounded like overdriven guitars. Their

tunes were dark and stylized, but the surfeit of unmitigated gloom seemed to fall on deaf ears: by the time the singer paused to take a picture of the crowd (“for our mothers”), there wasn't much crowd left. ¶ Afterwards, the venue and crowd got mixed reviews from band members, but most saw the show as a point of pride for the local scene. “We mostly play small places,” said **Bacon** bassist Bogi Reynisson. “It was cool to play a bigger place like this. Now I want to go home, warm up and come back to see more great bands tomorrow.”

CHRISTIAN HOARD NASA >>> **Mannequins in a Vacant Lot** <<< A very slick band began playing at seven thirty sharp, looking groovy and soulful with their slicked-back hair and expensive suits. They seemed like they were going to start something interesting... and then **Bryndís** walked onstage. ¶ An unremarkable songwriter with an equally forgettable voice, **Bryndís** provided NASA with the perfect opening act: quiet, utterly pointless soul-funk performed by a band that did exactly what was required of them – no more, no less. For all their soulful posturing, it quickly became painfully obvious that they were nothing but fill-ins, a session band for an unimaginative musician. The intros to the songs were by far the most interesting thing in the set. Jerky and stop-start almost to the point of being arrhythmic, they let the rest of the band's scant light shine until the songs actually started. ¶ A breath of fresh air after the stale boredom of **Bryndís's** soulless soul, **Dyröin** had it all: Simplicity, energy, heart and precocious, precious honesty. Hafdís and Sigrún led their band through their cheerful girl-guitar pop with enviable determination, perfectly expressing the nature of their music with song titles like *Candyfloss* and *Bubble Girl*. ¶ Just as the simple energy of their first few songs began to wear thin, they went for a touch of depth, expanding their melodies ever so slightly to carry them home to the greatness I knew they could achieve when their set began. There were moments, however, that a greater blood alcohol level in the average crowd member would have been appreciated; it's hard to maintain that high an energy

They seemed like they were going to start something interesting... and then Bryndís walked onstage.

BRYNDÍS NASA

level when you're playing in front of a vacant lot full of mannequins attending a funeral. By the time they walked off, even **Magnús**, the bored-looking bassist was having fun (how it's possible to stay that still when playing the astonishingly cheerful crescendos he plays is beyond me). ¶ Although people had gradually been filing in all evening, **Bob Volume** had no effect whatsoever on the crowd, and rightly so; they blew. Profoundly. Evidently these absolute idiots had sat down, listened to a bunch of prog, taken every lame element they liked and patched it together into the sorriest collection of slimy guitar rock songs to ever see the light of the NASA stage. I could prattle on endlessly about everything they did wrong, but my time and the reader's would be better spent shovelling llama dung or doing something equally productive. SINDRI ELDON >>> **Mocking It Big** <<< Beautifully sad string arrangements and the sea rolling into the venue on a screen in the background raised expectations of an epic rendition of **Daníel Ágúst's** solo material. What the audience got instead was a set of masterly crafted songs reaching their brilliance only by the singer/composer's poking fun at them, overdoing it all by dancing like a nymph dressed completely in black with a feather-collar and gloomy make-up. From pre-recorded walls of harmonies to live samples of his voice and trumpet, **Daníel Ágúst** elated the crowd at the packed venue. ¶ Plunging from tender male/female duets into guitar-driven rock spiced up with 80s keyboard chords, **epo-555** got the audience dancing, not least by means of their singer/guitarist Mikkel, who expended so much effort he ended up lying on the stage gasping for breath. ¶ **Powersolo** vigorously tried to extend their shortened set as much as possible, which the audience clearly appreciated, being greatly amused by the singer's impersonation of animals' voices and simple but rocking redneck songs. ¶ **Junior Senior** came onstage with a big party consisting of a drummer, a bassist, a second guitarist and two background singers and left the audience partying big. Their feel-good songs mocked the styles of several decades of disco music,

including rapping, catchy choruses and clap-alongs. The audience seemed familiar with more than just their top three single *Move Your Feet* and went completely wild, managing to drag the band back onstage for an encore. JULIKA HUETHER 12 TÓNAR >>> **Crying Punk** <<< At 12 Tónar record store, local talent **Þórir**, a.k.a. **My Summer as a Salvation Soldier**, played for a full, albeit somewhat small, house. **Þórir** is locally known as a member of the Icelandic hardcore punk scene, playing guitar for both **Gavin Portland** and **Fighting Shit** as well as serving as a member of folk punk heroes **Death Metal Supersquad**. As a solo act, however, **Þórir** is a far cry from hardcore. Sitting by himself, guitar in hand, he quietly strums through lo-fi tunes in a broken voice that sound so full of angst and desperation that it brings you to the edge of tears. He played a wrenching four-song set, including numbers from last year's debut album, *I Believe In This* and his newly released follow up, *Anarchists Are Hopeless Romantics*. SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON >>> **Zep Cream of the Crop** <<< **Mike Pollock**, a musician who has been in the “biz” in Iceland for an impressive three decades, opened the evening with a series of **Bob Dylan**, **Hank Williams** and **Johnny Cash** covers, performing his original stuff in between. Following Pollock's act were **The Telepathetics**. Their performance consisted of powerful, melodic rock that was slightly reminiscent of early **Radiohead**, with excellent vocal harmony between the bassist Hlynur Hallgrímsson, and the lead singer Eypór Eyriksón. They also did a little acoustic cover of **Billy Joel's** *For the Longest Time*, while waiting for the guitarist to replace a broken guitar string, much to the audience's amusement. ¶ **Pan** were less melodic and more hardcore than their predecessors. They played with sincere ambition and enthusiasm, but got frequent onstage visits from the sound guy, due to a bass tuned so low that it felt like CPR to the audience. **Black Valentine** followed – their first move was to create a little altar at the front of the stage with a picture of **Jesus Christ**, surrounded by candles. And yes, every single one of **Black**

From pre-recorded walls of harmonies to live samples of his voice and trumpet, Daníel Ágúst elated the crowd at the packed venue.

DANÍEL ÁGÚST NASA

Valentine's songs turned out to be about our lord and saviour. What also made this band an act of its own was the fact that all five members sang along in every song. Their sound was simple and acoustic, with a box drum, bass, kettledrum and guitar. Overall, their performance was fun and humorous, and lead singer Pétur Jóhann Einarsson's great voice made it a pleasurable experience. ¶ **Shadow Parade** specialize in slow, melancholy rock. The band members played with effortless ease and sophistication. The drummer Magnús Magnússon, and the bassist Andri Magnússon, who happen to be brothers, had a tight connection, which resulted in a solid, muscular framework. **Shadow Parade** gave away free CDs with four of their songs to everybody in the audience. Next up was the power trio **Nr. Núll**, the only band of the night who performed their songs in Icelandic. The lead singer had an impressive vocal range and was arguably the best singer of the night to that point. ¶ The last act was without a doubt the Zep cream of the crop. **Deep Jimi and the Zep Creams** were absolutely mind-blowing. Their name is, of course, compiled from the names of **Deep Purple**, **Jimi Hendrix**, **Led Zeppelin** and **Cream**, and they play epic rock similar to these musical legends. The huge line that formed outside of Grand Rokk proved that they're an act worth seeing. **Deep Jimi and the Zep Creams** had an unparalleled onstage performance. Apart from Mr. Pollock, they were the most experienced performers of the night, which was underlined by their confidence and accuracy. Singer Sigurður Eyberg was like a force of nature on the stage, with breathtaking vocals and amazing interpretation. The remaining band members, Björn Árnason, Þór Sigurðsson and Júlíus Guðmundsson, all had impressive stage presence and incredible skills, resulting in a kick ass rock'n'roll experience. The crowd couldn't get enough of them, and **Deep Jimi and the Zep Creams** were cheered back on the stage for an encore. In case you missed them, they're playing at Dillon on Friday and Saturday night. ÞÓRDÍS ELVA ÞORVALDSDÓTTIR BACHMANN



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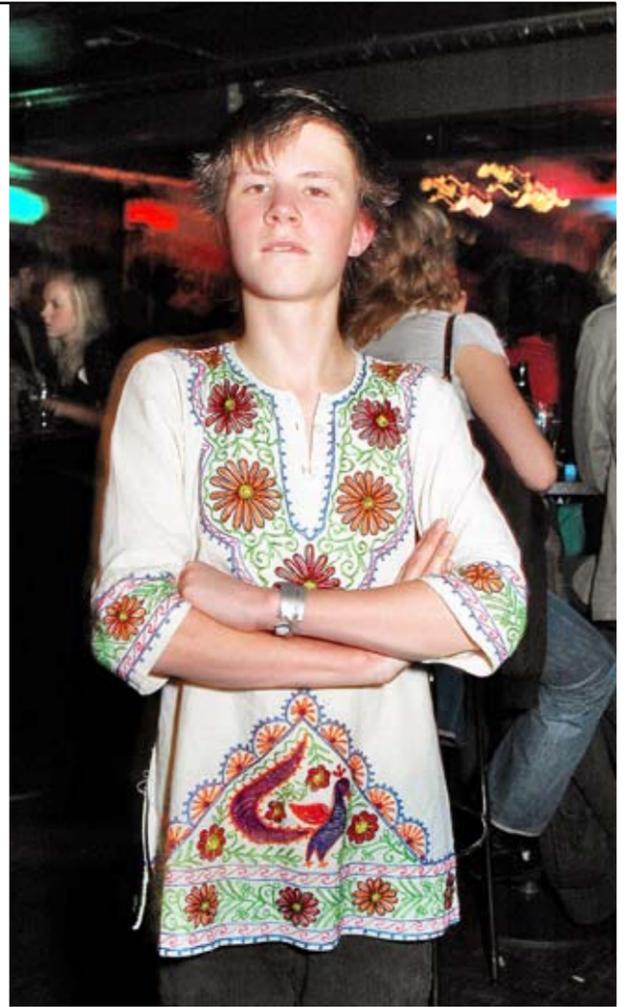
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Immediately After...
 Jakóbínarína Stun Grand Rokk on Wednesday
 PHOTOS BY JULIA STAPLES



The Calm Before...
 Þórir at Prikið, Refusing Breakfast Because of Exhaustion, One Week after his 21st Birthday.
 PHOTO BY HEIDI HARTWIG

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DRINK

A Foreigner's Guide to Drinking in Iceland

BY PAUL F NIKOLOV

The first thing you need to know is, if you just arrived in Iceland, you better have bought some booze at the airport. Especially if you're visiting someone. No forgiveness on this one. Still, if you're here, we guess you have to deal. A large beer in a bar will cost you 600 ISK (about ten US dollars) on average, but it is possible to drink both cheaply and with quality in Iceland, provided you know where to go.

Any night out involving drinking should begin with a trip to Vínbúð, also known as The State Alcohol and Tobacco Monopoly of Iceland. A half-litre of Víking beer, which in a bar goes for 600 ISK, is only 216 ISK at Vínbúð. Stock up here, go home, get your drink on with some friends and then go out around midnight (the bars don't begin to get interesting until then anyway) and you'll end up spending a fraction of what you normally would on a night out.

For those who are more interested in quality spirits than getting wasted for less, Vínbúð not only has a decent variety of quality wines, but the price of a good European wine is often lower than that of a cheap American wine. For example, while 750mL of California's Delicato Merlot goes for 1220 ISK, the same volume of France's Le Piat d'Or is only 920 ISK. That's right: now you can act like a Sideways-style wine snob without killing your budget. Except of course they drink California wine in that movie... and we just dissed American wine... ahem.

In terms of liquor, keep in mind that low quality spirits often sell for about the same price as top shelf stuff: 700 mL of Smirnoff costs the same as the same volume of Finlandia, 2990 ISK. This is because prices for liquor are determined by alcohol content and popularity, so you can drink like an adult instead of a college freshman for the same money.

If you need something particularly exotic, like sake or absinthe (albeit



hallucinogen-free), you should know that not all Vínbúð outlets are created equal. You're more likely to find more obscure products at the larger outlets. For Reykjavík, this means either the Kringlan mall or Heiðrún, which is in the east of town.

For more information on your alcohol options, plus locations, you can check out Vínbúð's website at <http://www.atvr.is>.

Vínbúðin Austurstræti (downtown Reykjavík)
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Vínbúðin Heiðrún (best selection)
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Fri. 9:00-19:00
Sat. 9:00-16:00

DRINK

TÍU DROPAR (ten drops) on Iceland's Favourite Beverage

BY ELIZA REID

Beer was illegal in Iceland until 1987. A very cheap bottle of wine costs 800 ISK (12 USD). It is no surprise that no tradition of casual drinking has developed here. Instead, coffee is the drink of choice. Ironically enough, coffee-drinking is one area where the Icelanders are not highest "per capita" (the Finns have achieved this honour), but coffee drinking and coffee culture are staples of Icelandic society.

Here are the local favourites for this non-alcoholic beverage consumption:

Café Paris and Segafredo: Most known for their locations near key pedestrian squares. Great for people-watching.

Kaffitár and Te og Kaffi: Leading importers of coffee in Iceland, along with Segafredo, Kaffitár and Te og Kaffi dominate the local barista competitions.

Kaffi Mokka: Is the local institution—the oldest and most storied coffee shop in town.

Café Paris,
Austurstræti 14, 101 Reykjavík, 511 1020.

Segafredo,
Lækjartorg 5, 101 Reykjavík, 562 5200.

Kaffitár,
Bankastræti 8, 101 Reykjavík, 511 4540.

Te og Kaffi,
Laugavegur 24 and 27, 101 Reykjavík, 562 2322.

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DRINK

The Nohito and Other Brennivín Cocktails

BY BART CAMERON AND HELGI ÞÓR HARÐASON

When the nicest guy in rock, Dave Grohl, recently visited Iceland again, he insisted that the local rotgut, Brennivín, was the best liquor in the world. Rumour is that he wants to import it to America on the large scale.

Brennivín is a fine, hard caraway-flavoured schnapps, traditionally served as cold as possible. So cold that the liquor gels, if possible. To achieve this effect, place the bottle inside a milk carton full of water, and let it freeze overnight. This allows the bottle to maintain a solid block of ice.

Grapevine decided that if Brennivín is going to be the next big hard alcohol, there should be some appropriate Brennivín cocktails. For the most part, this led to gastrological disasters, which we will list below, but one charming bartender at Sirkus, the place in Iceland you're least likely to order or be served a cocktail, invented the definitive Brennivín cocktail, the Nohito—with alternative spelling No-Heat-O, if you're in the mood.

To enjoy a Nohito, combine one part Brennivín, one-and-a-half parts Martini Bianco, one-half part dark rum, lemon and lime, a dash of Bols Peppermint, and top off with three parts ginger ale. The result is a full-bodied, sneaky drink reminiscent of Burt Reynolds in his 70s heyday. Yes, that smooth.

After investigating rumours from the North, our reporter swears by the ultimate Icelandic cocktail. He calls it the Mountain King. Ingredients are two parts Brennivín, four parts mysa (the dairy runoff you get when you make yoghurt, available for purchase in most grocery stores), and Mountain Dew.

The other classic from the North was the 1972 – not quite a cocktail but extremely popular in Húsavík. Coca-Cola is rested on a radiator until extremely warm, then combined with three shots of Brennivín.

Along the disaster category, the first is Brennivín and Magic energy drink, which both tasted bad and produced dastardly effects on mind and liver,



something called the Pink Pig, made at Sirkus, which was nicknamed the Appendix by a man who claimed his appendix burst after one sip, and the OC, Original Confusion, a Brennivín and Egils Appelsín orange soda beverage that hurt a great deal.

The long and short of it is this: Brennivín can work well in cocktails, namely the Nohito and the Mountain King, but be extremely careful. You're playing with something a lot more powerful than fire. And the fact that it can have such disastrous consequences makes the whole experience that much more pleasurable.

DRINK

How We Get Our Drink On

BY BART CAMERON

Icelandic Beer—Thule

Icelandic beer has a heavy, extremely hoppy taste, similar to Carlsberg. Locals prefer Viking Gullfoss over Egill's two to one, but many Americans prefer Thule, which is the most accessible of the local beers.

International Beer—Cobra from India

You can't buy it everywhere in the world, but at the Kringlan Vínbúð, pick up this outstandingly rich pilsner. It comes in a small can, but people will still respect you, cause you're drinking Cobra.

Malt Liquor—Faxe 10

If you miss Olde English 800 or Miceys, or you just want to get angry, grab the black can of Faxe. It's expensive, as beers are rated according to their alcohol content, but it also takes a long time to drink, so perhaps that's value.

Brennivín

There is only one. The traditional Icelandic spirit is consumed in the winter over heavy foods, typically. But tourists should try it. Though beware, it is strong.

Whiskey—Jameson

All the superstars and musicians in town drink Jack Daniels. But Jameson sells at a much lower price for outstanding blended Irish whiskey. There simply is no cheap bourbon in this country, so if you didn't bring it yourself, give up.

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